

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT: NOON BRIEFING RE FATE OF HAILE SELASSIE

FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF NOVEMBER 26 DEPARTMENT BRIEFING
RE FATE OF HAILE SELASSIE.

Q. PAUL, HAILE SELASSIE, IS HE DEAD, ALIVE, OR WHAT?

A. WELL WE SAW THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE FORMER
EMPEROR WOULD BE EXECUTED. THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY
HAS PUBLICLY DENIED THOSE REPORTS AND HAS ALSO DONE SO
SPECIFICALLY TO OUR EMBASSY IN ADDIS.

Q. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT WESTERN GOVERNMENTS HAVE
BEEN INTERCEDING WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT - FOR THE
LIFE OF THE EMPEROR. HAS THE UNITED STATES TAKEN SUCH
A POSITION?

A- WELL LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, IF I MIGHT: WE ARE
DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE EXECUTIONS THAT TOOK PLACE ON
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NOVEMBER 23, AND WE INSTRUCTED OUR CHARGE IN ADDIS TO

ASK THE MILITARY REGIME ON HUMANE GROUNDS, AND ALSO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND THE UNITED STATES, THAT NO FURTHER EXECUTIONS BE CARRIED OUT.

Q. WHO DID THE CHARGE ASK?

A. OUR CHARGE IS PARKER WYMAN.

Q. AND TO WHOM DID HE ADDRESS THIS REQUEST?

A. I DON'T HAVE THAT PRECISE INFORMATION. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

Q. THERE HAS BEEN NO INTERRUPTION IN U.S. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA DURING THIS?

A. WELL, WE STILL HAVE OUR EMBASSY IN ADDIS, IF THAT IS WHAT YOUR QUESTION IS.

Q. PAUL, WHAT WAS YOUR QUESTION ABOUT "NO FURTHER EXECUTIONS?" WAS IT SPECIFICALLY ON HAILE SELASSIE?

A. WELL I WOULD PUT THIS IN A TIME FRAME PRIOR TO THIS LATEST PRESS REPORT, WHICH HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN DENIED BY THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER.

Q. WELL DO YOU MEAN -- WHAT I AM NOT CLEAR ON HERE IS THE TIME CONTEXT. IS THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDING TO THE CHARGE AS A RESULT OF THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE UNITED STATES ABOUT FURTHER EXECUTIONS? OR DID THAT JUST HAPPEN TO BE COINCIDENTAL?

A. I THINK THEY ARE JUST COINCIDENTAL, IN THE SENSE THAT THIS PRESS REPORT COMING OUT OF BEIRUT THAT THE FORMER EMPEROR WOULD BE EXECUTED -- AND WHICH LED, IN TURN, TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DENIAL.

Q. WELL, YOU ALSO SAID THAT THEY MADE SIMILAR ALLEGATIONS OR INFORMATION, TO THE U.S. CHARGE.
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A. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. WAS THAT TODAY?

A. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN -- YES, THIS MORNING.

Q. HE HAD NOT ASKED, SPECIFICALLY, ON HAILE SELASSIE --

ON THE HAILE SELASSIE REPORT?

A. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THEY INFORMED US.

Q. PAUL, YOU INDICATED THE OTHER DAY THAT NO MAJOR AID REQUESTS WERE BEING GRANTED AT THIS TIME. IS THERE ANY SUSPENSION OF AID, NOW, TO ETHIOPIA, OR IS IT UNDER REVIEW? WHAT IS THE STATUS?

A. WITH RESPECT TO OUR ONGOING MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, THEY ARE UNDER REVIEW. YES.

Q. "MILITARY ASSISTANCE" AID, YOU SAID?

A. YES.

Q. WHAT ABOUT ECONOMIC AID?

A. I'LL --

Q. ARE THEY UNDER REVIEW -- TO ASK A SPECIFIC QUESTION?

A. YES, THEY WOULD BE UNDER REVIEW ALSO.

Q. WELL THEN, THERE HAS BEEN , TO THIS EXTENT AT LEAST, A CHANGE IN RELATIONS TOWARD ETHIOPIA, AT LEAST.

A. I DIDN'T SAY THAT ANY DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN. I JUST SAID SIMPLY THAT THE PROGRAMS WERE UNDER REVIEW AND --

Q. NOTHING HAS BEEN --

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A. AND YOU KNOW, I SAID ON MONDAY, AS JOHN POINTED OUT, THAT NO MAJOR NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE DECISIONS WOULD BE TAKEN, PENDING A CLARIFICATION OF THE SITUATION.

Q. DOESN'T THAT MEAN, THEN, THAT THE AID HAS BEEN SUSPENDED, IN EFFECT, OR NOT?

A. NO. IT MEANS THAT IT'S UNDER REVIEW.

Q. IS AID GOING THERE NOW? IS AID BEING PROVIDED NOW? CONTINUING AID?

A. WELL I DON'T KNOW PRECISELY HOW TO DEFINE IT. IF YOU ARE ASKING ME IF OUR AID PROGRAMS ARE -- OUR ONGOING AID PROGRAMS -- HAVE BEEN TERMINATED; I AM SAYING THAT

IS PRECISELY THE QUESTION THAT IS UNDER REVIEW AT THIS TIME.

Q. BUT PAUL, YOU STILL CAN DELIVER FREE GUNS WHILE YOU REVIEW THINGS. DO YOU, OR DON'T YOU?

A. WELL ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT RIGHT NOW, IS WHAT IS IN THE PIPELINE.

Q. BUT PIPELINE DELIVERIES ARE STILL BEING MADE. IS THAT CORRECT, OR NOT? I MEAN, WHAT WAS --

A. WELL THAT IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE ARE LOOKING INTO AT THE PRESENT TIME, IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR REVIEW.

ON BACKGROUND: IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT NO MAJOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT ITEMS ARE IN FACT IN THE PIPELINE AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Q. BUT THE OTHER STUFF, MEANTIME, IS CONTINUING. IS THAT CORRECT?

A. WELL, YES, BUT WHAT I AM THINKING OF IS PERHAPS THE PL 480 PROGRAMS, DROUGHT RELIEF, THAT SORT OF THING. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY INTERRUPTION AT THE PRESENT TIME.

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Q. SO ECONOMIC AID IS ONGOING WHILE IT'S BEING REVIEWED- BUT MILITARY AID IS NOT?

A. NO. I SAID BOTH PROGRAMS ARE UNDER REVIEW.

Q. BUT IS IT ONGOING? THE ECONOMIC AID IS ONGOING WHILE IT'S BEING REVIEWED -- YOU SAID.

THERE'S A PL 480 GOING ON WHILE IT'S BEING REVIEWED.

A. WELL LOOK, YOU KNOW YOU ARE ASKING ME TO TALK ABOUT INCREMENTS OF VARIOUS AID PROGRAMS. ON A BACKGROUND BASIS, I SAID IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT NO MAJOR MILITARY ITEMS, UNDER THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE, IN ANY EVENT, IN THE PIPELINE.

HOWEVER, THERE VERY WELL MIGHT BE, IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, WHEAT OR SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY, THAT IS ALREADY BEING A PART OF THE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD NOT BE INTERRUPTED. THAT WAS THE DISTINCTION I WAS TRYING TO DRAW.

Q. PAUL, THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO MAJOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN THE PIPELINE -- DOES THAT STEM FROM A DECISION MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT, OR IS THAT JUST IN A NATURAL COURSE OF EVENTS UNDER THE PROGRAM?

A. I THINK THAT THE LATTER WOULD BE THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION.

Q. PAUL, JUST TO RETURN BRIEFLY TO THE ETHIOPIAN SITUATION -- IS THERE ANY U.S. ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, NAMELY, WHETHER THE DISCLAIMERS HAVE ANY INTENT TO EXECUTE THE EMPEROR, APPEAR TO BE SOLIDLY BASED, OR ANYTHING OF THAT KIND?

A. WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY? THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ASSURED US THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO THE REPORT, AND WE HAVE TO TAKE THAT ASSURANCE ON GOOD FAITH.

Q. HAS ANYTHING FURTHER COME TO LIGHT ABOUT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IDENTITY OF MAJOR MENGISTU, OR THE POLITICAL MAKEUP OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE?

A. NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY ASSESSMENT OF WHAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS LIKE IN ADDIS.

Q. WELL CERTAINLY THE EMBASSY DOES REPORT DOESN'T IT?

A. YES, THE EMBASSY IS REPORTING ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION, AND THE DEVELOPMENTS--

Q. COULDN'T YOU SHARE WITH US SOME OF THESE REPORTS?

A. I THINK I WOULD PREFER TO NOT, BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE THAT THE SITUATION IS ENTIRELY CLEAR.

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